

Montana Department of
Public Health & Human Services

Section:

Best Beginnings Quality Child Care Initiatives

CHILD CARE

Subject:

Infant Toddler Merit Pay

Supersedes: **Child Care Policy Manual Section 7.5 (9/1/06)**

References: **USCS (658G, 658E (C) (3) (B)) ARM 37.80.602**

**General
Information**

The Montana Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), Infant Toddler Merit Pay program was developed with the goal of improving the quality of services provided to infants and toddlers by encouraging child care providers and care givers to participate in additional training.

Early childhood professionals who work a minimum of 15 hours a week in a registered group or family child care home or a licensed child care center may apply to participate in pre-approved infant toddler training that leads to certification as a *Montana Certified Infant/Toddler Caregiver*.

In addition, applicants must be current members of the Montana Early Care & Education Practitioner's Registry.

**Infant Toddler
Merit Pay
Eligibility**

Early childhood professionals must be working a minimum of 15 hours a week in:

- A registered group or family child care home,
- A licensed child care center,

Applicants must also be current members of the Montana Early Care & Education Practitioner's Registry.

Qualifying individuals who are in the process of applying for child care licensure or registration may apply for Infant Toddler Merit Pay; however, award funds will not be released unless the licensure/registration process is completed. (The establishment of a PV number in CCUBS provides the necessary verification.)

Infant Toddler Merit Pay will be awarded to approved applicants completing all four modules of the Infant Toddler training, and attain Montana Infant Toddler Caregiver Certification.

Caregivers who have achieved the Montana Infant Toddler Caregiver certification are ineligible to participate in the Infant Toddler Merit pay program.

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**Infant Toddler
Merit Pay
Application
Process**

Infant Toddler Merit Pay applications are available in the summer and are available at all Child Care Resource and Referral agencies and at the ECSB.

Infant Toddler Merit Pay applications are due in the ECSB no later than 5:00 PM on the stated date in September for each award year. Applicants will be informed by October 1 of each award year regarding the approval or denial of their application.

Individuals may only apply for one Merit Pay program; multiple applications will be automatically denied.

Application forms must be complete and include all required information and signatures in order to be considered. A complete application must include the following:

1. Proof of employment at a qualifying facility including a child care facility's PV number and the owner/director's signature attesting to the fact the applicant is employed at the facility;
2. An applicant signature;
3. A listing of all training on an Infant Toddler Merit Pay Plan of Study (form CC-104b); and,
4. A completed W-9 form.

The Infant Toddler Merit Pay application and Plan of Study are submitted to DPHHS/ECSB for approval. Applicants are selected for participation in the Infant Toddler Merit Pay program, based upon the content and quality of their application, their priority ranking, and availability of funds.

- If a participant does not complete the approved Plan of Study, (all four modules of the Infant Toddler training), required for the Infant Toddler Merit Pay, and attain Infant Toddler Certification, she/he will not will not qualify for any Infant Toddler Merit Pay funds.
- Upon completion of the approved Infant Toddler Plan of Study, the applicant must submit a copy of their Infant Toddler Certified Caregiver Certificate in order to receive their Infant Toddler Merit Pay award.

Priority for

Infant Toddler Merit Pay priority will be given to participants who:

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**Infant Toddler
Merit Pay**

1. Providers who have not previously received the Infant Toddler Merit Pay award and are participating in training that leads to completion of the Montana Infant Toddler Certified Caregiver certification and are currently working with infants and toddlers.
2. Providers who have not previously received the Infant Toddler Merit Pay award and are participating in training that leads to completion of the Montana Infant Toddler Certified Caregiver certification and are not currently working with infants and toddlers.

**Infant Toddler
Merit Pay
Summary And
Proof Of
Training
Completion.**

Participants may request payment of their Infant Toddler Merit Pay award when they complete the approved Infant Toddler coursework.

Infant Toddler Merit Pay participants are required to be current members of the Montana Early Care & Education Practitioner's Registry. If a participant did not submit a copy of their Montana Practitioner's Registry Certificate at the time of application, they must provide that information when they request their award.

Additionally, participants who were in the process of becoming licensed or registered when they applied for Infant Toddler Merit Pay, but had not yet completed that process, will need to show proof that a license or registration certificate has been granted before Infant Toddler Merit Pay funds will be released.

In order to receive any Infant Toddler Merit Pay Award, participants are required to submit a signed summary form that includes an attestation stating that they are working in a licensed or registered child care facility. This form must also be signed by the appropriate owner/director; and include the following attachments:

- A copy of their Infant Toddler Certified Caregiver Certificate.
- A current copy of their Montana Early Care & Education Practitioner's Registry certificate (If a current copy is not already on file); and
- A current copy of their Montana child care license or registration certificate. (If Infant Toddler Merit Pay was granted pending completion of a child care license or registration certificate).

Approved Infant Toddler Merit Pay training must be completed within the

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program year, which is August 1 through August 31. For example, August 1, 2007 through August 31, 2008. Extensions will not be granted.

CCUBS Process Upon receipt of an application the ECSB Contract Specialist will verify the applicant is entered as a 'Person' in the CCUBS system; and review the 'Person' screen to ensure the address matches the address on the Infant Toddler Merit Pay application and on the attached W-9. If the applicant is not input as a 'Person' in CCUBS, the ECSB will enter this information based on the Infant Toddler Merit Pay application and W-9.

NOTE: Use the TAB key on the computer keyboard when navigating in CCUBS from box to box on the 'Contract Application' screen.

1. Applications are logged in on the CCUBS system when they are received in the ECSB office. This is done by entering information on the 'Contract Application' screen.

CCUBS Field	Appropriate Entry
Applicant ID:	The applicant's PS number
Fed Fiscal Year	The appropriate federal fiscal year
Application Date	The date that information is being entered into CCUBS
Application Received	The date the application was date stamped
Contract Type	Infant Toddler Merit Pay (MRIT)
Application Status	Use the drop-down menu and select <i>Received</i> ;
Effective Date	08-01- [year of application];
Denial Reason	Not used to enter in application requests
End Date	08-31-[year when training must be completed];
Proposal Score	Not used when entering application requests
Application Checklist	Mark the <i>Training/Project Plan</i> .

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2. Applications are prioritized and evaluated for participation in the program.
3. After the applications have been evaluated, the ECSB Program Specialist will update the 'Contract Application' screen in CCUBS. The 'Application Status' will be changed to either *Approved* or *Denied* and saved. If the status is *denied*, the Program Specialist will also be required to enter a denial reason on the screen.
4. CCUBS will generate, and automatically send a denial letter to unsuccessful applicants.
5. Upon approval of the application, the ECSB Contract Specialist will set up the contract for all approved applicants following the steps below:
 - a. On the 'Contract Application' screen in CCUBS, double click the box in the upper right hand corner labeled *Contract No.* This action will take the worker to the 'Contract' screen.
 - b. On the 'Contractor' tab, enter the PS number of the applicant in the white box under Person ID* and hit the TAB key.
 - c. On the 'Budget' tab, put the cursor in the 'Budget Section' box. Select the Infant Toddler Merit Pay [FFY] from the Budget Section drop down menu. **Using the mouse** move the cursor into the 'Budget Item' box and enter the following two budget items (Budget Items may be typed in word-specifically or may be selected from a list using the F9 key):
 - ☐ *Training* hit the TAB key and type \$500.
 - ☐ *Advances* hit the TAB key and type in 0.
 - ☐ Click on the SAVE icon.
 At this point, CCUBS will SAVE the screen with a Contract Number.
 - d. On the 'Contract Details' tab select the Contract Status drop down menu: highlight 2. *Negotiation Complete*, and SAVE; highlight 3. *Final In-Route Signatures*, and SAVE; highlight 4. *Mailed*, and SAVE; lastly highlight 5. *Executed*, and SAVE.

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6. Letters of approval must be printed in the ECSB central office so that an *Infant Toddler Merit Pay Summary* form can be attached and sent to the applicant. In CCUBS, navigate to 'Notifications' and enter the contract number in the appropriate column, hit Execute [F8]. Click on 'View Notification' and print the approval letter from this PDF document.

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